March Madness is Nothing New

It is time for March Madness!

The game of basketball began in 1891, and less than 25 years later had already become quite a competitive sport among high schools and colleges.

The West Virginia boys' high school basketball tournament began in Buckhannon on March 21, 1914. The Gymnasium had been built in 1912, and was considered to be the largest and finest in the state of West Virginia.

That year, Elkins and Wheeling each claimed to be the best in the state, and West Virginia Wesleyan issued an invitation to come and settle the matter. Elkins emerged victorious and became the first “State Champions.”

The following year, 1915, Wesleyan athletic director Harry Stansbury contacted high schools all over West Virginia, inviting them to participate in an open tournament for the state basketball title. Fourteen teams answered the call, and the building of a sports tradition was under way.

The Gymnasium stood until it was razed in 1974 – the year that the John D. Rockefeller IV Physical Education Center opened.